

Way We Were
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Letters Home

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Home. For many of those reading this, home is being surrounded by the beautiful Wasatch Mountains. Home is breathtaking bluebird pow days. Home is a wonderfully supportive and giving community. For others of us, home might be the California coast or the bright lights of New York City. For all of us, however, home has an undeniable draw. Home has the ability to refresh and rejuvenate. And while there might not be many similarities between Parkites today and Parkites of the past, I'm convinced of one commonality: connecting with home can sustain and encourage us.

For Lily Stephens, a Parkite deployed during World War II, meeting with other Park City boys, and reading the Park Record was just the connection to home that he needed. In 1944 he wrote to Dad Raddon, "I see by The Record you are traveling around and seeing your folks, what a happy time you have been having. I guess you deserve it after all the years you have worked and the kindness you have shown to people. I for one shall never forget what you did for me. We have had four boys from Summit County call on us and I send The Record on to them in camp here...Another boy named Prescott has wrote to say he gets some leave in December and could he come again to visit us with his chum. It's so much like home, and someone to talk to and relax. It's so good to be able to talk about Park City. They are all home sick and miss their homes terrible...Thanking you for all your kindness in the past and I hope to be able to get The Record again from you in the near future."¹ For Stephens, sharing The Record created bonds between him and other soldiers from Park City. It was a way for them to connect and experience home, even though they were thousands of miles away from it. These encounters with each other, or those moments reading letters of other Park City soldier boys printed in the Park Record, likely helped them to feel the crisp, cold air and imagine the bright blue skies of those bluebird pow days we still know and love today. It's these moments, I imagine, that encouraged them to continue on in their fight, eager to return one day.

Join us tomorrow, Thursday, September 12 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at the Jim Santy Auditorium in the Park City Library for a film screening of *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*. The Film Series and the Museum are screening this film in conjunction with the Museum's current traveling exhibit *Mail Call*. Roger Ebert said of the Sundance and Grammy award winning film, "There have been many great films about Vietnam. This is the one that completes the story."

¹ Lily Stephens, *With Our Boys in the Armed Forces*, 13 January 1944



Caption: A Parkite couple posing for a photograph, man in World War I military type uniform. If anyone can identify the people in the picture please contact the Museum at 649-7457.

Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum, Emmett Wright Digital Collection